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ABSTRACT

It is the recommendation of the Committee on Academic Progress of Students to the Faculty Council at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro that each undergraduate student may elect to be evaluated on a "Pass/Not Pass" scale in 1 course each semester, with a maximum of 8 courses being allowed for the degree. One semester courses are exempt from this limitation. The credit earned under the "Pass/Not Pass" evaluation will count toward hours for graduation, but these credits and grades will not be used in computing a student's cumulative grade point average. In his major rield, a student must be evaluated on a minimum of 24 semester hours on the "A," "B," "C," "D," "F," grade scale. The decision to be evaluated on a "Pass/Not" basis should be declared at registration and must be declared by the end of the first week of instruction. (Author/HS)

ED 063890

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
at GREENSBORO

MEMORANDUM

October 21, 1969

TO: The Faculty Council

FROM: The Committee on Academic Progress of Students

SUBJECT: "Pass/Not pass" experiment

The Committee on Academic Progress of Students, with the endorsement of the Academic Policies Committee, recommends the adoption of the attached experiment with a limited "Pass/Not pass" grading scale. They recommend that this experiment begin with the spring semester, 1970, that the results be studied at the end of the spring semester, 1970, and the end of the fall semester, 1970, and that a report of the results of the experiment be made known to the faculty for appropriate action during the spring semester, 1971.

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Attachment

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ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF STUDENTS

REPORT ON "PASS/NOT PASS" STUDY

During the 1968-69 academic year, the committee on "Academic Progress of Students" was asked to develop a recommendation concerning a "Pass/Fail" experiment. In preparation for making this recommendation, all members of the committee studied the literature concerning existing experiments with "Pass/Fail" as well as philosophical approaches to evaluating students' academic achievement.

Based upon this study, the committee sent a questionnaire to students and faculty to ascertain whether or not a "Pass/Fail" experiment would be desirable at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Two members of the committee, the Director of Institutional Research and a student, prepared a questionnaire and distributed it to students and teaching faculty. During the summer, the results of this questionnaire were summarized. (The summaries of the responses are available from any member of the committee.)

In addition to the information gathered from published literature and the questionnaire, the committee was furnished a summary of the discussions held by the Faculty-Student Reviewing Committee. Another source of information was furnished by the Student Committee Organized for Research and Evaluation. During the summer of 1969, members of this committee wrote approximately 200 institutions with enrollments of over 3,000 to gather additional information about experiments now under way nationally. The responses to their inquiries were given to the "Academic Progress" committee. (A summary of these responses is also available from any member of the committee.) Thus, with the help of faculty members, student organizations, and the members of the committee, much information was gathered upon which to base a recommendation.

Based upon the information gathered, several conclusions were drawn:

1) The five-point grading scale now in use at UNC-G is not without fault;

2) A two-point evaluation scale could be adopted on a limited experimental basis while maintaining high academic standards;

3) The two-point evaluation scale, while also not without fault, might ease some of the pressure of grades, thus enabling students to have a more meaningful educational experience by allowing them to concentrate their efforts on courses they considered most relevant to their goals in life as well as to allow them to enroll in courses they would previously have avoided for fear of damaging their academic records;

4) That faculty and students at UNC-G are ready for such an experiment. Of the 231 faculty responding to the questionnaire, 80 per cent were in favor of some type of "Pass/Fail" experiment. Of the 328 students responding, all but one were in favor of such an experiment.

With this response from faculty and students, the committee then looked at the questions raised by Stallings, et al in the article published in School and Society, March 16, 1968. Following the authors' admonition, they have attempted to recommend what seems most appropriate for this University. Their recommendations have been compared with the experiments at other institutions (as reported in the responses to the inquiries made by SCORE), and seem to be conservative.

Some of the questions raised by the Stallings article referred to previously are:

1) What courses should be available to students for evaluation on a two-point scale? The recommendation being made takes into consideration the curriculum here which, for many majors, allows no free electives. Thus, limitations are being recommended for major courses only.

2) What restrictions should be placed on the amount of credit allowed for the degree on the two-point evaluation scale? The committee is recommending that a student be allowed to enroll for only one course a semester for this method of evaluation. The exemption of one-hour elective courses is being made because freshman honors tutorial and sophomore honors seminar are one-hour courses and, by faculty action, are being evaluated on a pass/fail basis. The committee wished to allow students to participate in the Freshman and Sophomore Honors program and in the general experiment with "Pass/Fail."

3) Should "Not pass" be computed in the student's grade point ratio? Because no quality points are assigned to a "Pass," a "Pass" is not used in computing this ratio. It seemed logical that if a "Pass" does not affect the ratio, neither should a "Not pass." This logic is supported by the study reported in College and University, Summer, 1968, where less than five per cent of the reporting institutions include "Not pass" in the computation of the grade-point average. It is also supported by the responses from the answers to the SCORE inquiries.

The recommendation prepared by the Committee on Academic Progress of Students was presented to the Academic Policies Committee. The changes recommended by the Academic Policies Committee were adopted by the Academic Progress of Students committee and are incorporated in the recommendation being made.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE FACULTY COUNCIL CONCERNING A

"PASS/NOT PASS" GRADING POLICY

In addition to the grades described above, each undergraduate student may elect to be evaluated on a "Pass/Not pass" scale in one course each semester with a maximum of eight courses being allowed for the degree. One semester credit courses are exempt from this limitation. "Pass" is the equivalent of "A," "B," "C," or "D," as described previously. The credit earned under the "Pass/Not pass" evaluation will count toward hours for graduation, but these credits and grades will not be used in computing a student's cumulative grade point average.

In his major field, a student must be evaluated on a minimum of 24 semester hours on the "A," "B," "C," "D," "F," grading scale. Approval of the election of the "Pass/Not pass" grading practice in any given course in the major must be granted by the department head.

The decision to be evaluated on a "Pass/Not pass" basis should be declared at registration and must be declared by the end of the first week of instruction. (See Calendar in University Bulletin for last date for course changes.) Instructors will be informed of those students who are to be evaluated on the "Pass/Not pass" scale. Final grades will be reported to the Registrar as "P" or "NP" for students having elected this option.